

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 COTONO 00194 051733Z

46

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 IO-11 ISO-00 EUR-12 AID-05 ACDA-05 EB-07 OMB-01

DHA-02 SCCT-01 SY-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 CU-02 EA-07 ARA-06 /117 W
----- 067295

P R 051620Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8105

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY CONAKRY

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

USMISSION USUN NY

C O N F I D E N T I A L COTONOU 0194

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PROP, AO, DM

SUBJ: ROUNDUP ON BENIN AND ANGOLA

REF A - COTONOU 167, B - COTONOU 165, C - STATE 23017,
D. STATE 10221,

SUMMARY: BENIN'S PRO MPLA CAMPAIGN CONTINUES AT FEVER PITCH.
RECRUITMENT OF VOLUNTEERS FOR AN EXPEDITIONARY FORCE
APPARENTLY IS MAKING HEADWAY AMONG THE UNEDUCATED URBAN UN-
EMPLOYED, THOUGH MANY BENINESE APPARENTLY ARE NOT ENTHUSIASTIC
ABOUT THEIR GOVT TAKING THEM INTO A WAR. MUCH PRO-MPLA
PROPAGANDA IS AIMED AGAINST USG BUT USUALLY WITHOUT SPECIFICALLY
MENTIONING US BY NAME. SEKOU TOURE'S STATEMENTS ARE BEING USED
HERE TO ATTACK MOBUT'S POLICY AND MAY RESULT IN ZAIRE CLOSING
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 COTONO 00194 051733Z

ITS EMBASSY. END SUMMARY

1. IN BENIN, FEB 3 WAS OFFICIALLY DECLARED AS A DAY DEDICATED TO SUPPORT FOR MPLA. ON THAT DAY THE GPRB'S RECRUITING OF VOLUNTEERS FOR ITS EXPEDITIONARY FORCE TO ANGOLA BEGAN. THE OCCASION WAS MARKED BY RALLIES IN ALL MAJOR TOWNS AND A SPECIAL PROPAGANDA BARRAGE FROM LA VOIX DE LA REVOLUTION. RECRUITING WILL CONTINUE THROUGH FEB 8.

2. PUBLIC REACTION TO GOVT'S RECRUITING CAMPAIGN HAS BEEN MIXED. RALLY IN COTONOU FEB 3 WAS WELL ATTENDED BUT MOSTLY BY SCHOOL CHILDREN AND WOMEN. APPARENTLY THOSE WITH ENOUGH EDUCATION OR INTELLIGENCE TO REALIZE THAT VOLUNTEERING FOR ANGOLA MIGHT ENTAIL RISK TO LIFE AND LIMB STAYED AWAY. ONE BENINESE UNIV TEACHER TOLD US OF HIS EXPERIENCE WITH A CLASS OF 136 STUDENTS. HE ASKED IF THEY WISHED HIM TO SUSPEND THE CLASS TO ALLOW THEM TO ATTEND THE PRO-MPLA RALLY. THEIR RESPONSE WAS A UNANIMOUS SHOUT "NO*" THE GOVT NEWSPAPER CLAIMS EMPLOYEES OF THE GOVT-OWNED BANK COLLECTED 87,000 CFA (ABOUT \$400) TO APPLY AGAINST TRANSPORTATION EXPENSES OF VOLUNTEERS. DESPITE RESERVATIONS IN SOME QUARTERS, RECRUITMENT IS APPARENTLY MOVING AHEAD. ACCORDING TO ONE RALLY PARTICIPANT, IT WAS ANNOUNCED THAT THERE WERE ALREADY ONE THOUSAND VOLUNTEERS. WE HEAR THAT THE VOLUNTEERS WHO HAVE COME FORWARD THUS FAR ARE THE DREGS OF URBAN SOCIETY -- THE UNEDUCATED COMMITTED REVOLUTIONARIES AND THE UNSKILLED UNEMPLOYED. ACCORDING TO THE HOUSEBOY RUMOR CIRCUIT, SOME OF THE UNEMPLOYED ARE VOLUNTEERING IN THE HOPE THAT ONCE THEY ARRIVE IN ANGOLA THEY WILL BE ABLE TO FIND JOBS. THERE IS AN UNCONFIRMED REPORT THAT THE GOVT ROUNDED UP 200 UNEMPLOYED AND INFORMED THEM THEY WERE VOLUNTEERING.

3. HOUR AFTER HOUR THE OFFICIAL RADIO SPOUTS PRO-MPLA PROPAGANDA, MUCH OF WHICH IS SCURRILOUS AND BLOODY (DEATH TO ROBERTO AND SAVINBI, DOWN WITH "FASCIST" IMPERIALIST COUNTRIES WHO ARE BACKING FNLA, UNITA AND SOUTH AFRICA, ETC.) PROFESSIONAL ACTORS AND MUSICIANS HAVE BEEN PRESSED INTO SERVICE TO PRODUCE A PRO-MPLA SKITS, JINGOES AND DANCE TUNES.

4. ALTHOUGH THE TARGET OF MUCH OF THE PROPAGANDA IS THE USG, THE U.S. IS SELDOM EXPLICITLY MENTIONED. FOR EXAMPLE, TODAY'S

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 COTONO 00194 051733Z

EDITORIAL IN GOVT NEWSPAPER EHUZU SAYS, "...THE SWORN ENEMY OF OUR PEOPLES HAS, AS WILL BE RECALLED, PERPETRATED ITS AGGRESSION AGAINST THE INDOCHINESE PEOPLES: VIETNAM, CAMBODIA, LAOS. IT WANTED TO KEEP CUBA AND ALGERIA UNDER ITS BARBAROUS DOMINATION. AND NOT IT IS DESPERATELY STRUGGLING TO STRANGLE THE ANGOLAN REVOLUTION, USING THE VILEST SUBTERFUGES."

5. BENIN HAS ALSO BEEN USING STATEMENTS OF SEKOU TOURE IN PRESS AND RADIO TO ATTACK ZAIRE'S ANGOLAN POLICY. ZAIRIAN AMB HAS PROTESTED TO FORNMIN ALLADAYE, NOTING THAT ZAIRE WAS WITHDRAWING ITS ENTIRE DIP MISSION IN CONAKRY AS A RESULT OF GUINEA'S CRITICISM OF MOBUTU'S POLICY. HE TOLD ALLADAYE THAT ZAIRE HAD NO INTERESTES HERE AND MIGHT JUST AS WELL GET OUT. (WE HAVE HEARD THAT THE ZAIRIAN AMB, WHO HAS ALWAYS BEFORE TAKEN AN INNOCUOUS LINE HERE, BELIEVES HIS GOVT MAY ACTUALLY DECIDE TO CLOSE DOWN). HE ALSO WARNED FORNMIN THAT IF BENIN PERSISTED IN PROVIDING AN OUTLET FOR GUINEA'S PROPAGANDA, ZAIRE WOULD UNLEASH RADIO ZAIRE. ZAIRIAN AMB ASKED ALLADAYE WHAT BENIN WOULD DO IF ITS "VOLUNTEERS" IN ANGOLA FOUND THEMSELVES FIGHTING ON THE ZAIRE FRONTIER AGAINST ZAIRIANS, AND WHETHER BENIN HAD CONSIDERED THE POSSIBILITY THAT MANY AFRICAN NATIONS MIGHT SEND VOLUNTEERS TO THE TWO SIDES. THERE COULD BE A GENERAL AFRICAN CONFLAGRATION. ALLADAYE CONCEDED THAT BEIN HAD NOT THOUGHT ABOUT SUCH CONTINGENCIES.

6. COMMENT. WE DO NOT ANTICIPATE ANY LET-UP IN PRO-MPLA CAMPAIGN HERE. IT SERVES THE REGIME'S IMMEDIATE AIMS (TO GET BROWNIE POINTS WITH COMMUNIST "BROTHERS", DIVERT ATTENTION FROM ECONOMIC TROUBLES AND THE TOGO BORDER ISSUE, ETC.). HOWEVER, DESPITE VERY FIRM CONTROL THAT THE GOVT HAS NOW ESTABLISHED OVER BENIN'S POPULATION, THE WAR POLICY INVOLVES RISKS OF EVENTUAL UNPOPULARITY (E.G. STEMMING FROM EFFECTS OF CASUALTIES, REPORTS BY "VOLUNTEERS" THAT THEY ARE HELPING WHITES TO KILL BLACKS, ETC.).

7. HAVE HEARD NOTHING FURTHER RE PROPOSED BOYCOTT OF "FASCIST GODFATHERS" OF FNLA AND UNITA, AND "IMPERIALIST" SHIPS AND PLANES OF POWERS BEHIND RACIST SOUTH AFRICA INTERVENTION (REF B). END COMMENT.

ENGLE

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 COTONO 00194 051733Z

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TROOP DEPLOYMENT, POLICIES, FOREIGN ASSISTANCE, ANTIAMERICAN FEELING
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 05 FEB 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ElyME
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976COTONO00194
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760044-0462
From: COTONOU
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760280/aaaacsev.tel
Line Count: 154
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 COTONOU 167, 76 COTONOU 165, 76 STATE 23017
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 14 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <14 MAY 2004 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <08 SEP 2004 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ROUNDUP ON BENIN AND ANGOLA
TAGS: PFOR, PROP, AO, DM, MPLA
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006